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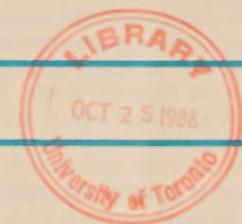
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■ Report on the Management of Government Records

The 1987-1988 Report of the National Archivist to the Secretary of the Treasury Board on the Management of Government Records was submitted in June of this year. The following is the executive summary of that report.

There has been some improvement in the management of government records since the issue in 1983 of the Treasury Board records management policy. A few departmental records management programs exhibit encouraging strength. For the most part, mail and messenger services seem well managed, records managers are committed to full implementation of the policy, and generally, departmental

management is responsive to audit recommendations. Improvement notwithstanding, this report mirrors its predecessors in finding the state of records management in government still weak and progress too slow.

The most serious shortcomings are uncertain information retrieval, inadequate records protection, slow scheduling of records for retention and disposal, and the frequent failure to transfer to the Archives records of enduring value to the nation.

As to the pace of progress, at the present rate very few institutions will have fully implemented the policy by the end of the decade, and most others trail badly. When the policy was issued, it was the expectation of Treasury Board Secretariat that all departments and agencies would be in full compliance by that time.

The report examines whether, with the slow rate of improvement, the policy may be asking too much. While acknowledging that a complex of several factors makes swift implementation difficult, the examination concludes that the policy is sound, implementation is feasible, and the rewards warrant the effort.

The report recommends that the pursuit of full implementation continue. At the same time, it recognizes that the Treasury Board policy focuses primarily on the management of paper and microform records, and does not apply to electronic records in automated office environments or to data in automated information systems. The resolution of important issues in these areas, which increasingly preoccupy institutions and the Archives, will only be possible with a more comprehensive approach.

The greatest potential for bringing about the effective management of

government information in all media lies, the report concludes, in the broader sweep and greater import of such initiatives as the *National Archives of Canada Act*, the government security policy, and the proposed Treasury Board policy on the management of government information holdings. These legislative and policy thrusts hold the promise of causing information to be perceived as central to the business of each department and agency. Only such a perception can provide the impetus for the concerted effort necessary to bring the information holdings of government under proper control and direction. ■

■ Professional Development

The training function is a vital part of the efforts of the Government Records Branch to provide leadership in the management of government records. While existing courses had served their purpose well for some years, the program was in need of revitalization. There was evidence that some content was out of date and that delivery was not meeting demand.

Following extensive consultation with departments and agencies, the program was revamped. The three-week course "Records Management Principles and Practices" was converted into three one-week courses, and a fourth was added for the continuing professional education of records managers. This will allow participants to follow a progression of courses over several years that are of increasing difficulty and can be applied to different work situations. Following is a brief description of each course.

RMPP 1: Organizing, Transmitting, Retrieving and Protecting Government Records

For personnel who already have experience in some records functions, and whose current or likely duties require them to design, improve and manage classification systems and indexes; reference and records transmission services; and records security, essential records and disaster recovery programs.

RMPP 2: Scheduling Government Records for Retention and Disposal

For personnel with substantial experience in a variety of records functions at the entry level, and who would require a detailed understanding of the development and revision of schedules, schedule approval criteria and procedures, and the application of approved schedules.

RMPP 3: Managing the Records of a Government Institution

For personnel with operational and supervisory experience in a variety of records functions, whose current or likely duties require them to deal with the legislative and policy context of the records program of their institution, the overall management of the records program, and the design and improvement of procedures and systems.

RMPP 4: Special Topics in the Management of Government Records

For officers and managers whose current and likely duties are those of records manager or equivalent, and who require a deeper understanding of the application of technologies to the management of records, the application of principles and practices in EDP environments, feasibility studies respecting the creation or revision of

systems, ministerial records, and integrated management of information holdings.

The Branch also offers an **Introduction to Records Management** course, dealing with the basic principles and techniques of the management of federal government records. This course is for entry level records personnel. A **Microrecording Technology** course, which deals with micrographics, computer-assisted retrieval and optical disk technology, is recommended for officers interested in the application of this technology.

Additional information concerning the courses and their availability in the National Capital and the regions can be obtained by contacting the Records Management and Micrographic Systems Division of the Government Records Branch. ■

support of this effort, the National Archives recently completed a study on ODA/ODIF and arranged for a tutorial to be presented to the members of the Committee.

In addition to OAD/ODIF and SGML, the Committee will be asked to explore other information technology standards that could offer solutions to the functionality issues related to electronic document management. The reports that have been generated in connection with the work described in this article are as follows:

- Second Interim Report of the PAC/DOC Information Management Working Group (September 1985);
- Data and Document Interchange Standards and the National Archives (June 1987);
- Management of Information in Integrated Office Support Systems (IOSS) — Preliminary Functional Specifications (May 1988);
- The National Archives and the Application of the ODA/ODIF Standard (March 1988).

Should you wish to receive copies of these documents (comments are encouraged and welcome) or more information on the projects described above, please contact: Automated Information Systems Division, Government Records Branch, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3 (819) 953-5721. ■

■ Document Management in Office Automation Systems

The relatively recent introduction of micro-computer technologies into the office has begun to have a profound impact on the capacity of organizations to maintain corporate control over their information holdings. It is also of substantial concern to the National Archives, which has recognized that the valuable records that document the evolution of government programs are being increasingly recorded and stored in electronic form. The discretion of the user to create, retain and dispose of electronically recorded information and the absence of policies, practices and standards to facilitate the proper care and handling of such information from a corporate perspective has raised the concern that valuable records may never reach the National Archives.

The quality of the archival records generated in office automation systems (particularly local area networks) is dependent upon the capacity of these systems to permit users to store and retrieve electronic documents within a corporately defined context. Based on this principle, the National Archives initiated a project to develop functional specifications for the filing, retrieval,

retention and disposition (including transfer to the National Archives) of electronic documents in office automation systems. The testing of concepts and the initial preparation of functional specifications emerged from experience gained during the Office Communications Systems (OCS) Field Trial at the Department of Communications. A subsequent review and refinement of the specifications was conducted by a small working group of private and government experts that was sponsored by the Canadian Workplace Automation Research Centre and the National Archives. The results of this effort are to be reviewed by the recently formed Treasury Board Committee on Office Systems. This committee comprises representatives from a range of departments, including those heavily involved in the implementation of office systems. Through its own representatives, the National Archives will share with the committee the results of its own efforts to install and test prototype software designed to address major components of the functional specifications in a LAN environment.

In addition to enhancing the functional specifications to reflect a government-wide perspective, the Treasury Board Committee will assess the applicability of such information exchange standards as ODA/ODIF (Office Document Architecture/Office Document Interchange Format) and SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language). In

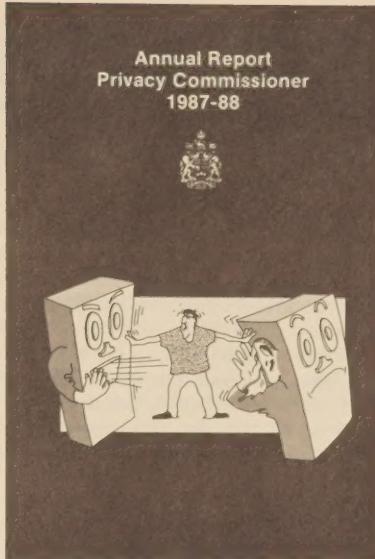
Records Audit by Privacy Commissioner

The *Annual Report* of the Privacy Commissioner, John W. Grace, was presented to Parliament at the end of June 1988.

This year the Commissioner's Compliance Branch planned and completed a series of audits of four large departments — Transport Canada, Environment Canada, Agriculture Canada and Correctional Service of Canada — with many regional offices and full ranges of personal information banks. Previously, experience was confined to a test audit of Fisheries and Oceans and to the exempt personal information banks of eight government institutions.

The privacy auditors examined areas such as the collection, use, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of personal information in each department.

In line with accepted audit practice, the reports addressed only those areas



requiring correction. Among other findings, auditors noted that the physical security of personal information was often inadequate. In several instances, disposal schedules approved by the National Archivist were not being applied, leading to information either being kept longer than necessary or less than the two years required by the *Privacy Act*. Auditors also found evidence of records not yet submitted to the National Archivist for approval of a disposal schedule.

The Privacy Commissioner reports directly to Parliament from a position somewhat similar to that of the Auditor General. The internal audit function within each government institution provides management with advance notice of areas that require attention.

Internal auditors are able to call upon the National Archives for assistance in their audit of the recorded information function within departments.

In response to the Privacy Commissioner's request for assistance, the National Archivist then reports to the Secretary of the Treasury Board each year on the current status of the management of records within the federal government. The corrective action taken by Treasury Board Secretariat and government institutions should help to prepare the public service for compliance audits conducted by the Privacy Commissioner on behalf of Parliament. ■

Ministerial Records: Definition and Management

The proclamation last year of the new *National Archives of Canada Act* introduced a significant change in the status of Ministers' records. Previously, the disposition of such records was entirely at Ministers' discretion. While many were donated to the Archives, other papers were occasionally destroyed or transferred outside the federal government.

The new Act defines three categories of records that are found in a Minister's office: personal or political records, records under the control of a government institution, and ministerial records. Personal or political records

continue to be the personal property of Ministers, to be disposed of as they wish (though preferably by donation to the Archives). The other two categories, however, may not be disposed of without the consent of the National Archivist, and those he deems of historic or archival importance are to be transferred to the Archives.

Personal or political records are considered to be those relating to the Minister's functions as a member of a political party or as a parliamentarian, and to the Minister's private life and interests. Records under the control of a government institution pertain to the mandate of a department or agency, and reflect the policies, programs, projects, activities and services of the institution.

Ministerial records are records of a member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada who holds the office of a Minister, and that pertain to that office.

They reflect such matters as deliberations of a Minister and his or her exempt staff on official questions or issues not referred to the Minister's department, official assignments from the Prime Minister or requests from colleague Ministers that are outside the scope of the Minister's departmental mandate, and discussions between Ministers on matters of policy that are not referred to federal public servants for advice or action.

The National Archives of Canada is now preparing guidelines for Ministers and their staffs and departments on the organization, handling and disposition of these three categories of records. It is our hope that what we do in this regard will facilitate the smooth conduct of Ministers' business while providing for the transfer to the National Archives, at the appropriate time, of their very significant contribution to the operation of the government and to the history of the country. ■

Priorities and Strategic Directions for Improving the Management of Government Records

The National Archives of Canada recently released its 1988-1992 Strategic Approaches, which outline the priorities and directions of the Department for the next five years. Following closely on the first priority of obtaining adequate accommodation to house the archives of the nation is the second priority — improving the management of government records.

Providing leadership in the control of government records, the National Archives strives to facilitate optimum records management in government departments and agencies and to provide cost-effective storage of inactive records. It does this not only to ensure quick and easy information retrieval but also to assure the preservation of information of enduring value.

The four areas of this priority are:

Requirements of the new legislation
In response to the requirements of the new *National Archives of Canada Act*, the Archives will intensify its efforts toward improving the management of recorded information within government institutions. These efforts will be made in a much larger arena than in previous years, owing to the Archives' new records management responsibility in an additional sixty government institutions. The Archives will work with the Treasury Board Secretariat to facilitate implementation of a comprehensive policy on the management of government information holdings policy.

EDP records

Emphasis will continue to be placed on providing for the scheduling and archival preservation of EDP records. It is estimated that Canadian government departments and agencies handle 2.5 to 3 million computer tapes containing at least ten times more data than are stored on paper. Because magnetic media are unstable and because procedures for accessing the data are constantly changing, a large part of today's history may be at risk.

Leadership in training and information

A new National Archives of Canada training program in the field of records

management will be put in place during the planning period, within the parameters developed following a professional development needs analysis conducted in 1987. The new program is designed to meet the need to train support personnel, to develop officers and managers, and to provide orientation to senior management in government institutions. The Archives' new responsibility, under the *National Archives of Canada Act*, for ministerial records will necessitate the publication of a guide for Ministers and their staffs. Within the planning period, the department will produce a publication advising on the creation of distinct filing systems aimed at distinguishing records of government institutions, ministerial records and personal papers.

Government records in the regions

There is pressing concern that the National Archives of Canada fulfil its mission with respect to the records of federal government institutions whose offices are located outside the National Capital Region. The National Archives has adopted the following guiding principle: Recognizing existing practices, regional federal government archival records produced in the regions, will, in general, remain in the regions under the control of the National Archives. ■

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To submit articles or receive the *Bulletin* write to: *Government Records Bulletin*, National Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3

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Le Bulletin est publié par la Direction des documents gouvernementaux de la Direction des programmes publics des Archives nationales du Canada. Pour souligner les réalisés ou pour recouvrir le Bulletin des documents gouvernementaux veuillez envoyer les renseignements pertinents à l'adresse suivante: Mission Gomme, Bureau des documents gouvernementaux, Archives nationales du Canada, 395, rue Wellington, Ottawa (Ontario), K1A 0N3.

Formalisation et information
Pendant la période visée, un nouveau programme de formation en gestion des documents sera mis en œuvre par le Département, en fonction des par-
metres élaborés à la suite de l'analyse des besoins en matière de formation
nemment réalisée en 1987. Ce nouveau programme permettra d'offrir de la for-
mation au personnel de soutien, de per-
fectionner les agents des hauts fonctions
nationales des institutions fédérales.

elles responsabilités des Archives nationales à l'égard d'une solidarité internationale avec le Secrétariat du Conseil des institutions fédérales. De concert avec le Secrétariat du Conseil des institutions fédérales, les Archives nationales ont la responsabilité de faire connaître la situation politique et sociale sur la base d'une politique exhaustive sur la base d'un fonds de documents gouvernementaux.

pour les ministres et leur personnel, ainsi que pour les ministères, sur l'organisation de la répartition, le rattement et la disposition de ces trois catégories de documents. Nous espérons ainsi faciliter la condition harmonieuse des affaires des ministres tout en posant les jalons

volumis pour le transfert aux Archives nationales, en temps opportun, de leurs archives importantes du gouvernement et à l'administration.

Les Archives nationales du Canada ont fait recemment paraitre leurs *Offre-tat*-tions stratégiques 1988-1992, qui expo- sent les priorités et les orientations du Département pour les cinq prochaines années. Parmi ces priorités, l'Amélio- gement continu au sein des organismes et dans les ministères et documents de la gestion optimale des documents dans les ministères et documents de la gestion optimale des documents fédéraux et d'assurer un entreposage économique des documents inactifs. Ce faisant, il ne vaut pas simplement faciliter la localisation des documents, mais aussi faciliter l'information ayant une valeur per- manente.

Quatre secteurs prioritaires sont identifiés.

Pour répondre aux exigences de la Loi sur les Archives nationales du Canada, le Département redoublera d'efforts afin d'améliorer la gestion des documents au sein des institutions gau- vernementales. Ces efforts porteront sur un champ beaucoup plus large que les efforts portés jusqu'à présent.

Exigences de la nouvelle Loi

Amélioration de la gestion des documents gouvernementaux

à la mission du Ministre et des discussions entre ministres sur des questions de politique à l'égard des questions frontalières fédéraux n'ont pas eu à interrompre.

Documents des ministres

des documents personnels ou politiques sont considérés comme ceux qui sont trait aux fonctions du ministre en vertu du décret du membre d'un parti politique et à ses intérêts privés. Les documents des institutions fédérées sont rassemblés à la mission d'un ministère ou d'un organisme et reflètent ses politiques, ses programmes, ses projets, ses activités, ses services et ses services.

La nouvelle loi définit trois catégories de documents qui trouvent leur place dans les cabinets des ministres : les documents personnels ou politiques, les documents des institutions publiques, les documents ministériels.

elle loi sur les Archives nationales du Canada a proclamé, j'an demeuré de la nou- Cet article a pour objectif de détailler les documents et les archives qui ont été créés ou conservés au cours de l'administration de M. Jean Chrétien. Il a également pour objectif de décrire les méthodes et les procédures utilisées pour la gestion et la préservation de ces documents et archives. L'objectif principal de cet article est de fournir une analyse approfondie de l'administration de M. Jean Chrétien et de ses réalisations en matière d'administration publique.

Centre annuel de l'observation et l'analyse de l'opposition et des partis politiques, 1988, p. 10.

Le commissaire à la protection de la vie privée, John W. Grace, a présenté son rapport annuel au Parlement à la fin de

Verification des documents par le commissaire à la protection de la vie privée

Après avoir largement consulté les ministres et organismes, la Direction a repensé le programme. C'est ainsi que elle a converti le cours de trois semaines sur les principes de l'artillerie à une réunion de deux jours.

Perfectionnement professionnel

domaines prooccupent de plus en plus les ministres et organisations et les archives, et pour les résoudre il faudra absolument adopter une approche plus

Certains des programmes de gestion des documents des ministères et organismes sont en cours de développement. Dans l'ensemble, les services de courrier et de messagers semblent bien gérés; les automatises aux données générées par des systèmes bureaux matériels. Les difficultés de taille dans ces derniers sont rencontrées dans les systèmes de gestion de documents et de gestion des programmes de gestion des documents.

Le rythme est si lent qu'il y a lieu de se demander si la politique est trop exi- gante. Toutefois, si bien qu'une com- binaison de plusieurs facteurs rende sa mise en œuvre rapide difficile, force est de conclure que la politique est vela- ble et que les résultats justifient les efforts.

Le rapport de l'archiviste national au Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor sur l'état de la gestion des documents gouver-nementaux, dont voici le résumé, a été présenté en juillet.

Rapport sur la gestion des documents gouvernementaux

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Bulletin des documents gouvernementaux

